wherein said collector has an active material provided thereon and there is provided a structure such that a pressure of 4×10^4 to 20×10^4 Pa is maintained perpendicular to the surface of said collector.

2. (Amended) The storage battery according to Claim 1, wherein a process involving the deposition from a gas phase is used to form said thin electrically-conductive ceramic layer on the surface of said collector substrate.

3. (Amended) The storage battery according to Claim 2, wherein said process involving the deposition from a gas phase is sputtering process.

4. (Amended) The storage battery according to Claim 2, wherein said process involving the deposition from a gas phase is CVD process.

5. (Amended) The storage battery according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, wherein the material constituting said collector substrate is a metal or metal alloy selected from the group consisting of lead, lead alloy, tin, tin alloy, bismuth and bismuth alloy.

6. (Amended) The storage battery according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, wherein the material constituting said collector substrate is an electrically-conductive polymer.

7. (Amended) The storage battery according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, wherein as said electrically-conductive ceramic there is used SnO_2.

8. (Amended) The storage battery according to Claim 7, wherein said electrically-conductive ceramic SnO_2 comprises an Sb compound incorporated therein in an amount of from 0.5 mole % to 8 mole % based on the total amount of moles of Sn and Sb.

9. (Amended) The storage battery according to Claim 7, wherein said electrically-conductive ceramic SnO_2 comprises F incorporated therein in an amount of from 7 mole % to 60 mole % based on the total amount of moles of Sn and F.

10. (Amended) A collector for storage battery comprising a thin electrically-conductive ceramic layer formed on a collector substrate, wherein as said electrically-conductive ceramic, any silicon compound selected from the group consisting of $TiSi_2$, Ti_5Si_3, $TaSi_2$, Ta_5Si_3, $NbSi_2$ and Nb_5Si_3 is used.

14. (Amended) The storage battery according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, comprising a bipolar battery type structure having a plurality of bipolar type electrodes each comprising a positive active material provided on one side of said collector and a negative active material provided on the other side, wherein the positive active material side of one bipolar electrode being opposed to the negative active material side of another, and a separator for retaining an electrolyte provided between said laminated bipolar type electrodes.

15. (Amended) The storage battery according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, comprising one or two of said collectors having an active material provided on one surface thereof but free of active material on the other surface, wherein the surface of said collector which is free of active material forms at least a part of the outer case of said storage battery.

Please add the following new claims:

20. (New) The storage battery according to any one of Claims 1 to 4, wherein said storage battery is a lead acid battery.

21. (New) The collector for storage battery according to Claim 10, wherein a process involving the deposition from a gas phase is used to form said thin electrically-conductive ceramic layer comprising any silicon compound selected from the group consisting of $TiSi_2$, Ti_5Si_3, $TaSi_2$, Ta_5Si_3, $NbSi_2$, and Nb_5Si_3 on the surface of said collector substrate.

22. (New) The collector for storage battery according to Claim 21, wherein said process involving the deposition from a gas phase is sputtering process.

23. (New) The collector for storage battery according to Claim 21, wherein said process involving the deposition from a gas is CVD process.

24. (New) The collector for storage battery according to any one of Claims 10 and 21 to 23, wherein the material constituting said collector substrate is a metal or metal alloy selected from the group consisting of lead, lead alloy, tin, tin alloy, bismuth and bismuth alloy.

25. (New) The collector for storage battery according to any one of Claims 10 and 21 to 23, wherein the material constituting said collector substrate is an electrically-conductive polymer.

26. (New) A lead acid battery comprising said collector for storage battery according to any one of Claims 10 and 21 to 23.

27. (New) The storage battery according to Claim 8, wherein said electrically-conductive ceramic SnO_2 comprises F incorporated therein in an amount of from 7 mole % to 60 mole % based on the total amount of moles of Sn and F.